132 137 On the western slope of the plateau and in the extreme south the climate is hot and semi-arid to arid. The ground is covered with clumps of low trees and thorny scrub, interspersed with stretches of grass land. In many places it is difficult to obtain water. In spite [149] of the aridity there is much fever in this region, making it unhealthy for Europeans.

101 The various environments just described are reflected in the culture of the natives of the different regions. The people of the east coast are mainly fishermen and agriculturists, with little dependence on cattle. Those of the plateau are mainly agricultural, but with cattle of greater economic importance. Those of the south and west subsist almost entirely on their herds. (For a discussion of these [113] differences see Linton: Culture Areas in Madagascar, American Anthropology, Vol. XXX, No. 3.)

[131] The Tanala occupy approximately the southern third of the eastern massif. Their territory lies roughly between 20° 30' and 22° 30' south latitude and between 46° and 48° 30' east longitude. On the east they extend, in places, to within a day's march of the sea, but nowhere reach the coast. On the west and south their territory everywhere ends at the edge of the open grass lands.

As neighbors they have, on the south and southwest, the Bara, who are a cattle people with a culture of west coast type. On the west lie the Betsileo and on the northwest the Imerina, both of plateau culture. On the north are the Betsimisaraka, of mixed plateau and east coast culture, and on the northeast the Betsimisaraka, of east coast culture. On the east lie three tribes, the Antambahoaka, Antaimoro and Antaifasina, who claim Arab descent and unquestionably have come under strong Arab influence.

177 The Tanala thus lie at the meeting point of four rather distinct types of culture. Influences from all of these can be traced in the historic culture of the tribe. However, the extent and importance of these influences vary greatly in different parts of the Tanala territory. The region inhabited by the Tanala Ikongo, in the south, presented few natural obstacles to invasion and was relatively desirable. It lay between the territories of two unusually vigorous and aggressive tribes, the Bara and Antaimoro. As a result, it was constantly being entered by groups coming from the southwest coast and cattle areas. These conquered and amalgamated with the earlier inhabitants, imposing much of their own culture.

177 164 The territory of the Tanala Menabe, in the north, was much less desirable. It was extremely mountainous, with almost impenetrable

1: Linton E-5 (1926-27) 1933 FY8 Tanala FY8

jungle and heavy rain throughout a large part of the year. There 177
was little to tempt invaders, but in time it came to be occupied by 166
defeated groups who had been driven from the more desirable coast
and plateau. Once established, these groups had little contact with
the outside world. There was almost no trade. Their neighbors to
the east and north were lethargic and they were protected from the
more warlike plateau tribes partly by their poverty in cattle and
partly by the plateau people's dislike for jungle fighting. Diffusion
from the neighboring areas was, therefore, reduced to a minimum.

According to Menabe traditions the aboriginal inhabitants of 178
their territory were of very low culture. They offered no resistance 173
to the settlement of the invading people and soon amalgamated with
them. The early invaders, coming from both coast and plateau, are
said to have been fairly uniform in culture. Possibly many of the
historic differences between these areas had not yet been developed.
The method of life which they established has continued in the region
down to the present time with only slight modifications. Certain
new features have been adopted, but these can be checked by reliable
traditions which give both the group from whom the new trait was
borrowed and the approximate time of its introduction.

The culture of the Tanala Menabe is still uniform in most details, 101
the only really divergent division being the Zafimaniry, who came
into the region from the plateau in relatively recent times. In com-
parison with the other Madagascar cultures it is relatively simple and
I believe it to be archaic. In many respects it agrees closely with the
ancient culture of the more advanced tribes, as revealed in their
traditions.

IV. COMPOSITION AND ORIGINS OF THE PRESENT TRIBE

101 619 The term Tanala means simply "People of the Forest." It is applied to all the inhabitants of a certain stretch of territory irrespective of their origins and political affiliations. There has never been a Tanala tribe, if that term is used in the sense of a socially or politically integrated group.

618 In order to understand the composition of the Tanala, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the native social organization. The various social units are based on a combination of two factors, common descent and common residence. The smallest unit, aside from the individual family, is the lineage, a localized group of relatives who claim descent from a single ancestor in the male line. This unit occupies a certain part of a village and usually holds its lands in common. Lineages which have few children, or which have been decimated by disease or otherwise weakened, pass out of existence. Strong lineages increase steadily in numbers and finally secede from the village and found a village of their own. By imperceptible degrees the lineage becomes a gens, new lineages springing up within it and 618 new villages being founded. Throughout the whole process territorial 631 unity is maintained. A lineage which moves too far away from its parent village soon loses touch and becomes a separate unit. Sometimes the gens remains politically independent and continues to grow and occupy more and more territory until it becomes a tribe. More often, however, the tribal groups are made up of several gentes which have been brought together by conquest, or by alliance against some common enemy. There is usually no strong central control in such a tribe and individuals feel much more closely bound to their gens than to the larger unit. Gentes may belong to different tribes at different periods and a lineage from one gens may secede entirely and go into the territory of another tribe, with which it will, in time, become incorporated.

618 166 Actually, the composition of the Tanala seems to have been constantly changing, various groups entering and leaving the territory, shifting their residence and alliance within it, expanding or contracting and often disappearing. This state of flux was stimulated by the local conditions. The gentes were usually small and were almost always at war with each other. A strong group of invaders could easily displace or conquer the natives, while weak immigrants, who entered peacefully, would be welcomed by any resident group for

1: Linton E-8 (1926-27) 1933 FY8 Tanala FY8

the addition to its man power. These alliances were aided by the common language of the natives and immigrants and by the great number of cultural features which they always had in common. Lastly, the region was never densely inhabited and the rapid, if temporary, exhaustion of the soil through the native methods of agriculture prevented the population from becoming too firmly fixed in one place.

The Tanala always have been, and still are, a more or less accidental agglomeration of groups of diverse origin who have entered the territory at different times. Although all of them have numerous cultural features in common and speak mutually intelligible dialects, they cannot be said to resemble each other more closely than the various units, individually, resemble certain of the units in neighboring tribes. In spite of this, the term Tanala seems to have more than a geographical significance for the natives themselves. They have a rather shadowy sense of unity, which is strongest in the case of gentes living close together. This is reflected in the different attitudes toward Tanala and foreign slaves and in the clear distinction between gentes which are Tanala and those which are not. Any informant can instantly place any gens which he has heard of as being inside or outside the tribe. Moreover, within the tribe there are certain large divisions, not necessarily political units, which are universally recognized. Apparently membership in the tribe is based mainly on length of residence in the territory. Any group which has lived in the region more than three or four generations is counted Tanala.

The Tanala themselves recognize two main divisions of the tribe, the Tanala Menabe, who occupy the northern part of the territory, and the Tanala Ikongo, who occupy the southern part. The Ikongo take their name from Mount Ikongo, about 8 kilometers from Fort Carnot. Sadaye Antoine says:

"Mount Ikongo was the refuge of all the inhabitants of the [southern] forest region in time of war. The top was level and could only be reached by one path, narrow and difficult. It was cultivated, providing food during sieges. This mountain was never conquered by the Imerina. The top was divided in to two parts, Ananjamanga on the northeast and Tsiajopepango on the south. On the southwest corner of Ananjamanga, called Mitioka, there was a small, rocky hill where the ancient inhabitants sacrificed an ox to their ancestors for protection and victory before going to battle. This hill was shaped like a cattle tick, kongo, and gave the name Ikongo to the mountain."

1: Linton E-6 (1926-27) 1933 FYS Tanala FYS

619 631 166 The preceding list of Menabe divisions is based on the statements of several different informants. Checks proved that no one of these had an accurate knowledge of the composition of the whole group. Moreover, they usually failed to distinguish between lineage, sub-gens and gens. All of them belonged to the Telearivo Varitra and knew only the larger divisions of the Telearivo Atsimo. The list is, therefore, both incomplete and inaccurate, but it is the best which could be gotten under the circumstances.

The Zafindiamanarana claim descent from Indriamanana, who entered the northern Tanala territory from the Betsileo country eight generations ago, including the present. He had six daughters, from whom the six divisions of this tribe trace their descent. They found the country almost uninhabited. Later some people of Antaimorona stock entered the region, but were absorbed by them. In recent times the Zafindiamanana were subject to the king of Ambohimanga, who was also king of the Manandriana. They submitted voluntarily, on the advice of Andrianampoimerina, founder of the Imerina empire. Prior to this union they had had no chiefs and no castes, being ruled entirely by their village councils and the heads of the lineages.

The Zafimaniry entered the region from the plateau in still more recent times, being forced out of their territory by war. They found some of their present divisions in the territory and incorporated them. Their culture is still largely of plateau type.

The Zafiakotry and Manandriana proper are of very mixed origin. Some of their sub-gentes claim Arab descent and most of them apparently came in from the east coast. In historic times the Zafiakotry were the noble gens of the Manandriana confederacy. The kingship was vested first in the Zafilambo, later in the Zanavavy.

631 361 The sub-gentes in all the groups were small. The Zanavavy had three villages of approximately fifty houses each, the Betsiratsy, two of eighty houses each, and the Zafilambo, three of fifty houses each.